

"pot-boiling" character; but he was resolved that there should be nothing of the nature of pot-boiling about his literary work. He found at last that he could not write more than one novel a year, and thus, though he drew his money regularly enough, the time came —in or about 1875 —when he owed M. Charpentier two or three volumes.

Mustering his courage, he called on his publisher to explain his position. But at the first words he spoke with respect to his overdraughts, M. Charpentier interrupted him.

" My dear friend," said he, " I do not wish to rob you. I do not want to derive more than my usual profits from your work. I have lately had an account of your sales drawn up on the basis of an author's royalty of forty centimes per volume,¹ and according to this account, it is not you who owe me money, it is I who owe you some ten thousand francs. Here is our agreement, I tear it up, and all you have to do is to see ray cashier."

As Alexis remarks, after telling this story, what other publisher would have done such a thing ? In Zola's case it raised him from modest circumstances to affluence. Had the original contract remained in force he would have earned, inclusive of the earlier payments from Lacroix. no more than forty thousand francs by the first

twelve volumes
of his "Eougon-Macquart" series. At least he
would have
earned no more during the first ten years of
their circula-
tion. But thanks to M. Charpentier's generous
honesty, —
the successive increase, too, of Zola's royalty
from forty to
fifty and sixty centimes per volume, the
various sums
accruing from special issues, illustrated
editions, popular

¹ The "books sold at 3 francs 50 centimes each; so the
above would repre-
sent a royalty of about 11 per cent.